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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR CROCKER'S JULY 11 MEETING WITH FM ZEBARI

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

11. (S/NF) Summary: In a July 11 meeting with Ambassador Crocker, S/I Satterfield, NSC Senior Director McGurk and DASD Kimmitt, Foreign Minister Zebari provided a readout of the previous day's visit of Turkish PM Erdogan, called the postponement of King Abdullah's visit a big disappointment but noted the GOI is ready to reschedule as soon as possible, confirmed that he had granted agreement to the just named UAE and Kuwaiti Ambassadors to Iraq but that there has been no progress in naming Iraqi Ambassadors to key posts, and said he foresaw no problems renewing UNAMI's mandate by the August 10 deadline. On SOFA issues, Zebari stressed progress is currently hampered by mixed signals from key GOI actors. He strongly advised the U.S. to meet jointly with the Executive Council and obtain broad policy agreement (details septel). Zebari also noted that UK PM Gordon Brown will visit Baghdad July 19 and Zebari will travel to Tehran at the end of the month for a Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) meeting. End Summary.

Erdogan Visit -- A Big Success

12. (S/NF) FM Zebari opened the meeting with a brief readout of the previous day's (July 10) visit of Turkish PM Erdogan, which he characterized as having gone "extremely well." Erdogan had stressed Iraq's importance for regional peace and security and had acknowledged the assistance the GOI and KRG had provided the GOT on PKK issues, the two countries had signed a Strategic Framework Agreement, and Turkey came away with a letter from Iraqi Oil Minister Shahrastani on the participation of Turkish Oil companies in Iraq. FM Zebari also noted that Turkish FM Babacan has invited him to Ankara to further develop the GOT-GOI/GOT-KRG counterterrorism dialogue and that KRG PM Nechivan Barzani had intended to come to Baghdad for the Erdogan visit but in the end could not make it. The Turks, he made clear, had been willing to meet him.

King Abdullah's Non-Visit -- A Real Disappointment
But Hopefully Rescheduled Soon

3, (S/NF) Turning to the biggest non-event of the week, FM Zebari said "we were all very disappointed that the King did not come." He acknowledged the specific security concerns that had prompted the last-minute postponement but noted that -- as the Erdogan visit had shown -- Iraq can provide the full ceremonial treatment appropriate to a head of state visit. Zebari said he expected a visit by the King to take place soon ("within days") but would be low-profile in nature. Noting that "the King is a warrior, a fighter" and would not cancel hastily, Zebari speculated that the hand of others -- in particular the Saudis -- was involved in the postponement. Ambassador Crocker and S/I Satterfield countered that they thought that unlikely and more probable candidates behind the decision lay within the GOJ itself.

Arab Ambassadors

¶4. (S/NF) Regarding the growing list of Arab countries naming Ambassadors to Iraq, Zebari stated that Kuwait had just announced Ali Mu'min as its nominee for Baghdad. In response to a query from Ambassador Crocker, Zebari confirmed that he had orally granted agreement both to Bahrain and Kuwait for their Ambassadors, with official written notification to soon follow. As for the reverse process -- getting internal GOI approval to name six career Ambassadors to key posts in the region -- Zebari reported no movement between the MFA and PM Maliki.

SFA/SOFA/Protocol

¶5. (S/NF) Much of the meeting was devoted to a discussion on how best to move forward quickly to conclude a Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA), Operational Protocol and, eventually, a SOFA (details to be reported septel).

UNAMI Renewal

¶6. (S/NF) In response to a query from S/I Satterfield, FM Zebari said he foresaw no problems in obtaining UNSCR renewal of UNAMI's mandate prior to expiration of resolution 1770 on August 10. PM Maliki and the GOI are happy with UNAMI and De

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Mistura, he stated, in particular the work done on elections and 140 issues.

Gordan Brown to Baghdad; Zebari's Tehran and Other Travel

¶7. (S/NF) Finally, Zebari gave a brief readout of his London discussions earlier in the week with UK Defense Minister Des Browne and noted that UK PM Gordon Brown will visit Baghdad July 19. Brown will ask PM Maliki directly "do you want us here or not?" If the answer is yes, the UK, he said, views extension of the current UN Mandate as the best option to provide them with a legal basis to keep troops in Iraq. Zebari also noted that he will accompany PM Maliki on his upcoming trips to Italy and Germany July 23-25 and would travel to Tehran at the end of July to attend a NAM meeting. Regarding his expected Tehran bilaterals, he noted "we have a lot to touch base on with them," noting in particular that he had continued to hold up Iranian nominees for Iraq postings based on specific security concerns.
CROCKER